

https://dspace.org/

Coal mining ecocide in South Africa a case study of Emalahleni, Mpumalanga

Nkosi, Bulelwa

2020
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/30631

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between carbon emissions in South Africa and the global climate crisis. South Africa is heavily dependent on coal. Coal generates electricity to households and industries thus it is central to the country's development. South Africa is committed to various climate agreements to reduce its dependence on coal, however, the realities on the ground dictate otherwise through the operation of Kusile and the building of the largest power plant to date, Medupi. There are more coal-fired plants to be built in the next few years for the sake of Eskom's longevity. This is contradictory to the climate agreements since coal is regarded as the largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world. Coal mining has negative externalities on mining communities and the overall climate. Using Marxist ecological theory, this paper will investigate how the extractive industries exploit natural resources due to capital accumulation, which hinders a just transition to a low carbon economy. The climate crisis and lack of policy implementation have led to a grass-roots approach, which aims to challenge the government and transnational fossil fuel corporations led by climate and environmental justice movements across the world including South Africa. This paper will highlight how important these movements are in dealing with the current ecological problem as they advocate for human rights and ultimately, environmental rights.

Keywords: climate change, ecocide, coal, environmental justice, extractivism, minerals-energy complex, neoliberalism.